

Cigars, Cigarillos, and Little Cigars

In recent years, the consumption of cigar products including large cigars, cigarillos, and little cigars (also known as brown cigarettes) has doubled nationwide.¹ Although cigars contain the same toxins and pose the same health risks as cigarettes, they are exempt from many of the regulations placed on cigarettes. As a result, these products have been manufactured and promoted to maximize their appeal to both youth and adults. This fact sheet provides information about cigars and the use of cigars in Indiana.

Cigars vs. cigarettes^{2,3}

- **Cigars** are any roll of tobacco wrapped in a tobacco leaf or any substance that contains tobacco. They can vary in size and shape and contain less than 1 gram to 20 grams of tobacco.
- **Cigarettes** are any roll of tobacco wrapped in paper or any substance that does not contain tobacco. They are uniform in size and contain less than 1 gram of tobacco each.

There are currently three major cigar products: ^{2,3,4}

- **Premium cigars** typically contain 5 to 20 grams of tobacco, can measure over 7 inches in length, and do not have a filter.
- **Cigarillos** contain about 3 grams of tobacco, are slightly bigger than cigarettes or little cigars, and do not have a filter.
- **Little cigars/brown cigarettes** contain about 1 gram of tobacco, are similar in size and appearance to cigarettes, are wrapped in brown paper containing some tobacco leaf, and often have a filter.



Premium cigar



Top: tipped cigarillo
Bottom: cigarillo without tip



Top: cigarette
Bottom: little cigar

Flavors, marketing, and accessibility of cigars¹

Although flavored cigarettes are illegal in the United States, tobacco companies still manufacture and sell flavored cigar products. These products are often available in menthol, candy, or fruit flavors that appeal to youth. They may also be sold in smaller package sizes than cigarettes, such as single sticks or packs of two, making them cheaper and more easily accessible to youth and other price-sensitive populations. Cigar products are also often sold in brightly colored, youth-appealing packaging and may be displayed on store countertops rather than behind the counter like cigarettes, increasing the visibility and accessibility of these products to both children and adults.

Hazards of cigars:

Cigars are addictive and contain high levels of nicotine.⁷

Cigar smoking increases the risk of:⁸

- Cancer of the lip, tongue, mouth and throat
- Cancer of the larynx
- Cancer of the esophagus
- Lung cancer
- Other lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Coronary heart disease

Cigar smoke contains the same toxic chemicals as cigarettes including: ^{3,8}

- Carbon monoxide (e.g. car exhaust)
- Hydrocarbons (e.g. coal, petroleum, tar)
- Ammonia (used in fertilizer and household cleaner)
- Cadmium (used in batteries)

Secondhand smoke from cigars is a major source of indoor air pollution.



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Price of cigar products¹

The average wholesale price of many cigar products, particularly little cigars, is lower than that of cigarettes. In Indiana, cigar products are also taxed at a lower rate than cigarettes. Tobacco companies have routinely altered their cigar products to avoid tax increases and maintain lower cigar prices. These lower prices may make cigars especially appealing to price-sensitive populations, such as youth and low-income adults. Nationally, as cigarette prices have increased, cigar sales more than doubled between 2000 and 2012, while cigarette sales dropped by 34%.

Cigar, cigarillo, and little cigar use among Indiana adults⁵

- 3.9% of Indiana adults age 18 and older smoked cigars, including cigarillos and little cigars, in 2015.
- Current cigar use was highest among young adults ages 18 to 24 (9.8%).
- 7.1% of adult males smoked cigar products compared with 2.0% of adult females.
- Current cigar use was higher among African Americans (5.7%) than whites (2.9%).
- Adults making less than \$20,000 annually and with less than a high school education smoked cigar products at more than twice the rate (8.3% and 8.1%, respectively) of the general population (3.9%).

Cigar, cigarillo, and little cigar use among Indiana youth⁶

- In 2014, 4.9% of middle school and 23.4% of high school students reported ever smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars in their lifetime.
- Although current use of cigar products has declined among Indiana youth since 2000, 1.7% of middle school students and 9.3% of high school students were current cigar smokers in 2014.
- Additionally, 1.9% of middle school and 11.6% of high school students reported smoking cigar brands that are commonly flavored, such as Black and Milds, Swisher Sweets, and Phillies Blunts.
- After cigarettes, cigars are the most commonly used combustible tobacco product among middle school and high school youth in Indiana.

References

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⁵ Indiana Adult Tobacco Survey, 2015.

⁶ Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey, 2014.

⁷ Hoffman, Dietrich & Hoffmann, Ilse. (n.d.). Chemistry and toxicology. In *Smoking and tobacco control monographs, monograph 9* (Chapter 3). Retrieved from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/m9_3.PDF

⁸ Burns, David M. (n.d.). Cigar smoking: overview and current state of the science. In *Smoking and tobacco control monographs, monograph 9* (Chapter 1). Retrieved from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/m9_1.PDF